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REMARKS

The above amendment with the following remarks is submitted to be fully responsive to the Official Action of June 5, 2003. Initially, the Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the interview conducted with the Applicant's representative on September 3, 2003 during which the Office Action and the proposed amendments to independent claim 12 was discussed in detail. Reconsideration of this application in light of the interview and the above presented amendment, as well as the allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Referring now to the Office Action, claims 12, 15, 18, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,460,785 to Popp. However, as previously presented, the Popp reference fails to disclose claimed features of the present invention in that it fails to disclose a nozzle shank having an elongated valve cavity and merely discloses a nozzle which is a small angular ring that is press fitted into the nozzle support portion. Moreover, Popp also fails to suggest the provision of an interference fit between sleeve 58 and nose piece 38 in that the interference fit between nozzle 40 and nose piece 38 is not positioned to prevent combustion gas from entering the space between sleeve 58 and sleeve 36.

However, independent claim 12 has been amended to further distinguish the present invention from the cited reference. In particular, claim 12 has been amended to recite that the nozzle shank is integral with the nozzle housing and that the valve element contacts the integral nozzle shank to prevent flow to the at least one injection hole when the valve element is closed in the elongated valve cavity. As conceded during the interview, this feature overcomes the Examiner's interpretation of the Popp reference as applied in this rejection.

Moreover, in view of the various concerns raised by the Examiner during the interview, claim 12 has been further amended to recite that the integral nozzle shank has a longitudinal axis and that the longitudinal axial dimension of the integral nozzle shank along the longitudinal axis is larger than the diameter of the outer peripheral surface of the integral nozzle shank. The Examiner's attention is directed to

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paragraphs 28, 36, and the figures of the application which provide support for the limitations recited. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is in order and respectfully requested.

Referring again to the Office Action, claims 13, 14, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Popp discussed above. However, this rejection is believed to be rendered moot in view of the amendments to independent claim 1. Therefore, the withdrawal of this rejection is requested as well.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. However, if the Examiner deems that any issue remains after considering this response, he is invited to call the undersigned to expedite the prosecution and work out any such issue by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,



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